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Moira Loftus
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Dear Mrs Loftus

Special measures monitoring inspection of Well Lane Primary School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 26 and 27 November 2024, on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and was the second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require special measures following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place in June 2023.

The purpose of a monitoring inspection is not to grade the school's key and (where applicable) provision judgements, but to identify and report on the school's progress. It is to highlight to the school and parents any improvements that school leaders have made since the school's previous graded inspection.

During the inspection, Sandra Hamilton, Ofsted Inspector, and I discussed with you and other senior leaders, staff, governors and the local authority the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. We visited lessons, spoke with pupils and reviewed examples of pupils' work. We also reviewed a range of school documentation, including the plans for improvement. I have considered all of this in coming to my judgement.

Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the school to no longer be judged as requiring special measures.

The school may not appoint early career teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

The position regarding the appointment of early career teachers will be considered again during any monitoring inspection we carry out.

The progress made towards the removal of special measures

This monitoring inspection focused on those aspects of the school identified as most needing improvement at the previous graded inspection. These were the quality of education, including in the early years and for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), pupils' behaviour, pupils' personal development and leadership at all levels.

The interim headteacher and two heads of school, commissioned by the local authority from a multi-academy trust in February 2024, continue to lead the school. Since the previous inspection, some staff have left the school and others have joined.

The school continues to improve the quality of its curriculums in the early years and key stages 1 and 2 well. It is increasingly making sure that the needs of pupils with SEND are central to its curricular thinking. The school has chosen well-thought-out curriculums and is introducing these carefully. In addition, the school is providing staff with high-quality opportunities to improve their subject knowledge, their subject leadership and their teaching practice. Staff are enthused about their roles in educating pupils.

Pupils are experiencing a richer, more suitable curriculum. They are starting to build a more secure grasp of curriculum content. Nevertheless, it is too soon to see the impact of the school's curriculum changes. For example, in 2024, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 was much lower than other schools nationally. In addition, teachers sometimes do not help pupils well enough to recall some of their previous learning. This means that, at times, some pupils do not connect new knowledge with what they have learned before.

The school is starting to place a keen focus on the teaching of reading. It provides helpful training and support for staff, including by using external experts. Staff are more skilled at teaching phonics to pupils than in the past. Teachers are starting to use assessment information carefully to review how well pupils are learning phonics. The school increasingly ensures that staff identify and support pupils with SEND effectively, including with their reading. Pupils in key stages 1 and 2 are beginning to read with much greater fluency and accuracy.

The school provides pupils with access to high-quality texts through its well-considered reading areas in classrooms. Staff select, with greater thought, the fiction and non-fiction books that they read to pupils. For example, in the early years, staff read key stories again and again to children in different ways. This is enthusing children and building their knowledge of storylines and characters. Pupils in upper key stage 2 also benefit from teachers reading to them, including from novels. A strengthened reading curriculum is now in place. However, it is too soon to see its impact on the knowledge of older pupils

about a wide range of authors and their works. This holds back pupils' readiness for secondary school.

By setting clear school rules and helping staff to support pupils to follow the behaviour systems, classrooms are now a much calmer place for learning. The school is developing staff's ability to support those pupils who need extra help to manage their own feelings and behaviour. Pupils told inspectors that they have recently experienced considerable improvements in the behaviour of other pupils. The school also takes issues of bullying seriously, including cyber-bullying. The school is now a happier place to be, for pupils and staff.

The school is starting to enhance its focus on pupils' personal development. It is beginning to identify, with greater clarity, the added opportunities that it will provide for pupils. Already, pupils are developing a more secure understanding of important topics, such as equality for women. This is helping pupils to be better prepared for their lives as modern British citizens.

The school has continued to refine its already successful arrangements for safeguarding pupils. It makes sure that leaders and staff are well trained and up to date in their knowledge of child protection procedures. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe at the school.

Governors are strengthening their work to support and challenge the school. For instance, they are starting to ask more insightful questions of the school and to seek more evidence to convince them of its improvement. The governing body is carefully considering the school's long-term development.

The school has embraced the support that the local authority has brokered for it through a multi-academy trust. It has used this support to strengthen its work to improve many aspects of its provision.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of governors, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Wirral. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Tim Vaughan
His Majesty's Inspector